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From: editor@mountainwestnews.org
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North Fork Of The Flathead

Photo courtesy of
Rick and Susie
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Mountain West News is a
program of the
O'Connor Center for the Rocky
Mountain West at
The University of Montana

Tuesday,

April 21, 2015

Produced by Shellie Nelson, MW News Editor

[Mountain West Voices](#)

Editor's notes:

In the **Rockies today**, tribes in Utah seek to protect 1.9 million acres of land in the southeastern corner of the state, the Bureau of Land Management releases its final Owyhee Canyonlands Wilderness and Wild & Scenic Rivers Management Plan in Idaho, and a couple of bills before the Colorado Senate explore expanding the state's role in managing those lands.

The Navajo Nation and the Ute Tribe want to protect a swath of land in southeastern Utah that is rich with archaeological treasures and they're enlisting the aid of other tribes in the area.

The proposal would create the Bears Ears National Conservation Area, and comes at a time when Utah U.S. Rep. Rob Bishop is working to put together a regional land-use initiative.

In Idaho, where U.S. Sen. Mike Crapo engineered the protection of six wilderness areas in 2009, the Bureau of Land Management issued its Owyhee Canyonlands Wilderness and Wild & Scenic Rivers Management Plan on Monday, opening a 30-day comment period on the plan.

Colorado joins other western states seeking a larger say in managing federal lands within its borders, with two state Senate bills currently under debate.

Senate Bill 39 will give the state a role in the management of federal lands, while Senate Bill 232 would create a task force to study the transfer of control of federal lands to the state.

[April 29-30: Asia-Montana Energy Summit, University of](#)

[Barbara Theroux reviews three books that deal with water in](#)

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Quote of the day:

"I told them the local peoples — the Navajos and Utes — have been doing the best we can to protect the sacred sites left behind by their people, but that it is becoming very difficult. Rooms are desecrated. Pot hunters have come and taken most of the pottery, and ruins are being destroyed every day. ... This is their homeland, and they need to help us find a way to protect it.

- Salt Lake Tribune"

Mark Maryboy, a Navajo elder and a former San Juan County commissioner, about what he told members of the Cochiti Pueblo, Hopi, Hualapai, Ute Mountain Ute and Zuni Pueblo tribes about the need to protect 1.9 million acres of land in southeastern Utah.

Rockies today

Navajo, Ute tribes team up to protect 1.9 million acres in SE Utah

In order to protect the archaeological treasures of their ancestors, the Navajo and Ute tribes in Utah are proposing the creation of the 1.9-million acre Bears Ears National Conservation Area in the southeastern corner of Utah, and last week, representatives of the Pueblo, Hopi, Hualapai, Ute Mountain Ute and Zuni Pueblo tribes toured the area to garner support for the proposal.

Salt Lake Tribune; April 21

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BLM releases final plan for Owyhee Canyonlands Wilderness in Idaho

The final Owyhee Canyonlands Wilderness and Wild & Scenic Rivers Management Plan was published by the U.S. Bureau of Land Management in the Federal Register on Monday, putting in motion a 30-day public comment period on Idaho's newest wilderness areas that include about 518,000 acres and 325 miles of wild and scenic river in Owyhee County. The plan covers the 50,929-acre Little Jacks Creek Wilderness, the 12,533-acre Pole Creek Wilderness, the 42,413-acre North Fork Owyhee Wilderness, the 267,328-acre Owyhee River Wilderness, the 52,826-acre Big Jacks Creek Wilderness, and the 89,996-acre Bruneau-Jarbridge Rivers Wilderness.

Idaho Statesman (AP); April 19

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Congress reauthorizes Secure Rural Schools funding for 2 years

All three members of Montana's congressional delegation voted in favor of a bill that would assure the Secure Rural Schools program, which was put in place more than a decade ago to provide funding to counties that lost revenue when federal timber receipts dropped, will continue for the next two years, providing some budgetary certainty to counties like Montana's Lincoln County, which is one of the largest recipients of SRS funds.

Flathead Beacon; April 21

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Colorado Senate advances bill to give state control over federal lands

Sen. Kent Lambert, the sponsor of Senate Bill 39, which would give Colorado shared authority with the federal government on management of federal public lands, said the measure is necessary to give the state more of a voice on wildland firefighting and criminal investigations. A separate bill, Senate Bill 232, which would create a study group on transferring federal lands to the state, will get a hearing Thursday before a Senate committee.

Durango Herald; April 21

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Federal judge declines to dismiss Utah ranchers' wild horse lawsuit

Earlier this month, U.S. District Judge Dee Benson rejected the request of American Wild Horse Preservation Campaign to dismiss a lawsuit filed by ranchers seeking to force the removal of wild horses in south-central Utah, allowing the lawsuit to move forward.

Salt Lake Tribune (AP); April 21

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West Virginia's warning on Alpha Resources worries Wyoming

Last week, West Virginia issued a warning that coal miner Alpha Resources may not be able to meet the conditions of its \$262 million self-bond to clean up coal mines in that state, which raised concerns in Wyoming, where the mining company has a \$411-million obligation to clean up two coal mines in the Powder River Basin.

Casper Star-Tribune; April 19

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Bighorn die-off prompts Montana to close hunting district near Plains

An aerial survey in early April of Hunting District 122 in Western Montana found just 18 bighorn sheep, the lowest number since the herd was reintroduced into the area in 1979, and state wildlife officials said the deaths of 90 sheep in the area over the past two years was likely due to pneumonia picked up from domestic herds that wintered in the area in 2012 and 2013. Due to the die-off, the state closed the hunting district for this year.

Missoulian; April 21

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Despite crude oil prices' upward trend, layoffs continue in Wyoming

After the latest round of shutdowns, Wyoming now has just 10 drilling rigs operating in the Cowboy State, down from 40 in November, and both Schlumberger Ltd. and Halliburton Co., international oil service companies that operate in Wyoming, announced more layoffs.

Casper Star-Tribune; April 21

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Water

Colorado county's water commission issues draft policy statement

The La Plata County Water Advisory Commission completed its yearlong review of the Colorado county's water resources and infrastructure and issued a draft policy statement that says groundwater supplies on the west side of the county are in decline, and that small, unregulated water systems threaten water supplies, among other things.

Durango Herald; April 21

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Opinion

Montana's federal lawmakers must break the dam on tribal water compacts

Now that the Montana Legislature has approved the state's water compact with the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, the deal goes to Congress, where it joins other such compacts that have been waiting for congressional approval for years, a situation U.S. Sens. Steve Daines and Jon Tester, along with U.S. Rep. Ryan Zinke, should work diligently to rectify.

Missoulian; April 21

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Wyoming senator must act on information gleaned from reservation hearing

It's unfortunate that Wyoming U.S. Sen. John Barrasso was the only member of Congress to attend the field hearing the chairman of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs held on the Wind River Reservation as the problems the residents of the reservation, and in particular the young people, face day-to-day such as methamphetamine, truancy, and others, deserve federal attention.

Casper Star-Tribune; April 21

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Beyond the region

Oregon governor declares drought emergencies in 2 more counties

On Monday, Baker and Wheeler counties in Oregon joined Crook, Harney, Klamath, Malheur and Lake counties where drought emergencies have been declared by the governor.

Portland Oregonian; April 21

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Economy:

Landlords angry about Target's quick retreat from Canada

Economy:

Owner of Dallas Mavericks invests in Idaho-based Melni Connectors

Community:

N.C. firm's deal to buy Rock Creek apartments largest in Colorado history

Community:

Federal judge in Montana returns co-founder of Yellowstone Club to jail

Mountain West Voices

Mountain West Voices

On the Bookshelf
Mountain West Perspectives
A Look Ahead

A Look Ahead
Montana, Missoula
On the Bookshelf
the West

Perspectives
changing workplace demands

Voices

4/15/2015: Powder River Basin

4/3/2015: Prom Dress Mecca

2/27/2015: Jima

1/28/2015: Cowboy For Hire

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